

NORTHFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

School Board Minutes

December 8, 2025
District Office Board Room

1. Call to Order

School Board Chair Claudia Gonzalez-George called the regular meeting of the Board of Education of Independent School District No. 659 to order at 6:00 p.m. Present: Butler, Epstein, Goerwitz, Gonzalez-George, Miller, and Quinnell. Absent: Nelson. This meeting was open to the public, live-streamed and recorded, and access to the recording was posted on the school district website.

2. Agenda Approval/Table File

On a motion by Quinnell, seconded by Goerwitz, the board unanimously approved the agenda.

3. Public Comment

There were no public comment.

4. Announcements and Recognitions

- The Northfield High School choral ensembles will hold their annual Traditions winter concert Saturday, Dec. 13 at 7:30 p.m. and Sunday, Dec. 14 at 2:00 p.m. at Skinner Memorial Chapel on the Carleton College campus. This year's theme is "Love Will Guide Us."
- The Northfield Middle and High School orchestras will hold their winter concert on Monday, Dec. 15 starting at 6:00 p.m. at the Northfield Middle School Auditorium. There is no admission charge, however, non-perishable and monetary donations will be collected before the concert to support the Northfield Food Shelf.
- Board Member Maggie Epstein attended the St. Olaf Christmas Festival and saw many Northfield graduates in the orchestra and choirs. She said it was a delight to see them all.

5. Items for Discussion and Reports

- a. Truth in Taxation Presentation for the Payable 2026 Property Tax Levy Followed by Public Comment. Director of Finance Val Mertesdorf reviewed the levy. The final certified levy for 2026 is \$27,468,778.21, representing a 0.98% decrease from the prior year.
- b. 2025-26 Superintendent Focus Area Update No. 1. Superintendent Hillmann provided an update on his 2025-26 focus areas.
- c. Policy Committee Recommendations. Superintendent Hillmann presented the policy committee's recommended updates to policies 203, 306, 519, 712, and 722. This will be an item for individual action at the Jan. 12, 2026 board meeting.
- d. FY2025 Audit Results and Presentation. Luke Greden with CliftonLarsonAllen, LLP, presented the results of the 2024-25 fiscal year audit. A copy of the full audit report is available upon request.

6. Consent Agenda

On a motion by Miller, seconded by Butler, the board unanimously approved the consent agenda.

- a. Minutes. Minutes of the regular school board meeting held on November 24, 2025.
- b. Gift Agreements. Gift agreements were included in the board packet.
- c. Policy Revisions. The updates to policies 417, 507.5, 612, 621, and 709 quoted directly from new Minnesota laws and other legal sources and create substantive changes to existing policies or are clerical updates that do not affect the substance of a policy. These updates are recommended by the Minnesota School Boards Association. Because the district endeavors to have policy align with state and federal law, that the board adopt the revisions as presented. These policies will continue to be evaluated as scheduled in the board's

policy review cycle.

- d. Overnight Field Trip Request. Northfield High School Boys Hockey Head Coach Charlie Cloud requested to take 40 varsity and junior varsity athletes to Baxter and Brainerd, MN Dec. 26-27, 2025 to play two games.

e. Personnel Items.

i. Appointments

1. Nancy Johnson, Rock and Roll Revival-Assistant Costumer at the High School beginning 12/1/2025. \$1,000 stipend.
2. Nadine Bartolo, Community School Club Leader for up to 8 hours/week at the Middle School effective 1/5/2026-5/31/2026. Step 4, \$22.33/hr.
3. Jess Hathaway, Instructor Assistant for Community Education/Recreation effective 2/7/2026-5/31/2026. Step 6, \$16.37/hr.
4. Kasie Larsen, Instructor Lead for Community Education/Recreation effective 1/13/2026-5/31/2026. Step 2, \$16.37/hr.
5. Aidan Wallig, Instructor Assistant for Community Education/Recreation effective 2/7/2026-5/31/2026. Step 2, \$15.29/hr.

ii. Increase/Decrease/Change in Assignment

1. Ashley Blatti, 5th Grade Teacher on a leave of absence and Long-term substitute Kindergarten Teacher at Bridgewater, add 1.0 FTE Long-term substitute 1st Grade Teacher beginning approximately 1/17/2026 through 4/10/2026. BA, Step 5.
2. Kiera Hasan, Community School Site Assistant for up to 10 hrs/week at the Middle School, add Community School Club Leader effective 12/2/2025-5/14/2026. Step 4, \$22,33/hr.
3. Brittney Hubbard, 1.0 FTE ECSE Teacher at the NCEC, add Event Worker at the High School beginning 12/8/2025. \$45/event.
4. Rachel Morrison, 1.0 FTE Assistant Girls Lacrosse Coach at the High School, change to 1.0 FTE Head Girls Lacrosse Coach effective 3/30/2026. \$6,653 stipend, subject to change upon the settlement of the 2025-27 NEA Agreement.
5. Dillon Hachfeld, Lunchroom Supervisor EA for 1.75 hours/day at Bridgewater, change to 2 hours/day effective 12/4/2025.
6. Kasie Larsen, Instructor Lead for Community Education/Recreation, add Instructor Assistant and Lifeguard effective 1/13/2026-5/31/2026. Lifeguard Step 2-\$15.29/hr and Instructor Assistant Step 2-\$15.29/hr.
7. Brent Ruuska, Instructor Assistant for Community Education/Recreation, add Official effective 12/7/2025-5/31/2026. \$30/game.
8. Justine Voronkova, Special Education EA for 4.25 hours/day at the High School and 3 hours/day at Bridgewater, change to 6.83 hours/day at Bridgewater effective 12/1/2025-6/10/2026.

iii. Leave of Absence

1. Adria Fischer, Early Ventures Teacher at the NCEC, FMLA leave of absence beginning 12/3/2025 and continuing through 4/30/2026.
2. Katie Malecha, Special Education EA/PCA at Bridgewater, leave of absence beginning 12/5/2025 and return date to be determined.

iv. Seniority Lists

The board is requested to approve the 2025-2026 Principal/Assistant Principals Seniority List.

7. Items for Individual Action

- a. Certify Final 2025 Payable 2026 Tax Levy. On a motion by Goerwitz, seconded by Epstein, the board unanimously certified to county auditors the 2025 Payable 2026 Final Certified Levy Limitation and Certification Report in the amount of \$27,468,778.21, which represents a 0.98% decrease from the prior year. This action completes the school district's process that began in September with the preliminary levy certification to Rice, Dakota, and Goodhue counties and the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE). The district reviewed and analyzed MDE's calculation and the school district's property tax base estimate by Rice, Dakota, and Goodhue counties. This levy, payable in 2026, will be a component of the 2026-27 fiscal budget.
- b. 2026-2027 School Year Calendar. On a motion by Butler, seconded by Miller, the board unanimously approved the 2026-2027 school year calendar as presented.
- c. High School FTE Request. On a motion by Butler, seconded by Miller, the board unanimously approved the request to add 0.40 FTE at the high school for the second semester of the 2025-2026 school year only. The 0.40 FTE will be used to hire a teacher for two English courses, allowing Dr. Sean DuBé to serve as a

full-time dean of students instead of 0.60 dean of students/0.40 English teacher for the remainder of the 2025-26 school year. The anticipated cost of this addition is \$15,165.

8. Items for Information

- a. Enrollment Report. Superintendent Hillmann reviewed the December 2025 enrollment report.
- b. Construction Update No. 20. Superintendent Hillmann provided an update on the NHS construction project.

9. Future Meetings

- a. Monday, December 15, 2025, 5:00 p.m., Board Work Session, Northfield DO Boardroom (Topic: Later School Start Times)
- b. Monday, January 12, 2025, 6:00 p.m., Organizational Board Meeting followed by the Regular Board Meeting, Northfield DO Boardroom
- c. Monday, January 26, 2026, 6:00 p.m., Regular Board Meeting, Northfield DO Boardroom
- d. Thursday, January 29, 2026, 5:00 p.m., Board Work Session, Northfield DO Boardroom (Topic: Later School Start Times)

10. Adjournment

On a motion by Quinnell, seconded by Goerwitz, the board unanimously approved to adjourn the meeting at 7:45 p.m.



Maggie Epstein
School Board Clerk